

New vision for an old *Friend*

by Barbara Castle

According to the Prince Albert History Calendar *De Prince Albert Vriend/Prince Albert Friend* was first published as a weekly newspaper in Dutch and English on 4 October 1912. At that time it carried local, national as well as international news*.

As anyone who has done the Red Bus Tour of historical Prince Albert will imagine, it might have been the only means of connecting people in this little outpost with the wider world. Its purpose was likely to have been to inform, keep folk in touch with each other on the outlying farms, and to give people something local to read when they stopped off at the staging post before their mule-train trip over the Swartberg.

Those who believed in the historical - as well as the future - value of the paper, worked hard to round up possible writers, editors, experts and others who shared their hopes for the paper. The unifying objective being to take the paper back to its roots ... and give it a new vision at the same time.

A meeting of interested parties was held at the Hotel Swartberg on 6th January 2016 and a new editorial team was born. It was felt that a group of editors would work well and ease the editing load. Writers Marlene Malan and Barbara Castle agreed to take on the role recently vacated by Kevin Jacobs, with Linda Jaquet as consulting editor to maintain continuity. While Denise Ohlson, Ailsa Tudhope, Reinie Smit, Christeline Esterhuizen, Cas St Leger and Barbara Gorniak offered support with proofing, writing and translating. And Barbara Botha (see article on P8) was perfectly poised to take up the design and layout challenge which had always been so ably filled in the past by Kerneels Mulder (see article on P8).

The new editorial team aims to build on the paper's original concept (that of being a friend to locals, visitors and seasonal dwellers) while ensuring that 'content is king'. Hard-hitting local news stories will keep readers up to the minute with objective, factual reporting. And a variety of magazine-style articles will form the bridge between townies and the farming community, youngsters and oldies, businesses and retirees. All of which promise to be of universal appeal to those who live or pass through our unique Karoo landscape.

This February issue is the first under the new guard and was brought from concept through to print in record time.

We hope you share our vision for the *Friend* and look forward to bringing you a fresh and exciting paper on the last Friday of every month. As usual it will be on sale at the Library and the Tourism Bureau and many other outlets throughout town.

* an original paper dated 1913 is filed at the Fransie Pienaar Museum if you would like to touch a little bit of history.